

traveling from as far away as Hawaii have distributed nearly 9 million pounds of food in disaster relief. The Houston Food Bank successfully provided relief to hurricane evacuees displaced from their homes, their belongings, and their livelihoods. Organizations like the Houston Food Bank have been a crucial aspect of ensuring that hurricane victims have felt welcome and well-treated in Houston.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Brian Greene, the President and CEO of the Houston Food Bank, together with the Board of Directors, the staff, the many dedicated volunteers, and all other supporters of the Houston Food Bank. These individuals are making a profound impact in their local community, and they are changing the worlds of thousands of hungry children. I thank you for your service to our community and your compassion to your fellow humans, and I wish you every success in future endeavors.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DONNELLY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MACK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MACK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### IMMIGRANT SOLDIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I stand here today to honor the contribution of immigrants that have been made to our Nation, particularly defending our Nation in support of comprehensive immigration reform.

We need effective legislation that strikes the right balance between national security and reforming our current immigration system. This should include a path to permanency for millions of law abiding and tax paying immigrants who call the United States their home.

It's my hope that the Senate finalizes debating their immigration reform bill, and that our Chamber continues to work to adopt legislation that will truly reform the system and enhance our Nation's security.

Immigrant families are an important part of our social fabric and our economy. Undocumented workers, you may not know, contribute as much as \$7 billion a year in Social Security into our system and \$1.5 billion in Medicare every year, yet do not collect those benefits.

Immigrants, you may know, play an important role in defending our Nation. In all of our wars throughout our

history, immigrants have fought side by side and have given their lives to defending America's freedoms and ideals.

Twenty percent of the recipients of the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest honor that our Nation bestows on our war heroes, has been granted to sons and daughters of immigrants. Their bravery is proof that immigrants are as willing as any other Americans to defend our country's freedom, and their service is no less important and valuable because of their immigrant status.

For example, as of May 2006, 33,449 noncitizens served in our Armed Forces, and more than 26,000 servicemembers have become U.S. citizens since the Iraq war began, and 75 servicemembers received posthumous citizenship.

Immigrants make up 5 percent of all enlisted personnel on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, and immigrants continue to demonstrate that they are a part of this country through their service in the military.

Without the contribution of immigrants the military, as we know it today, could not meet its own recruiting goals. Without the assistance of immigrants, the military could not fill the need for foreign language translators, interpreters and cultural experts.

Immigrants provide unique incredibly valuable contributions to the military, and it's critical that we continue to recognize and appreciate their efforts and that of their families.

In the district I represent in California, we've unfortunately suffered several casualties, including that of immigrant servicemembers who gave their lives for our country. One is the fallen Marine Lance Corporal Francisco Martinez Flores who died while serving overseas in Iraq. At the age of 21, and only 2 weeks away from gaining U.S. citizenship, Francisco was killed in the line of duty. He was one of thousands of lawful permanent residents who have volunteered their service to protect the United States by joining the U.S. military.

On April 2003, Francisco was granted posthumous U.S. citizenship and Congress honored his memory by passing a bill that I authored to celebrate his life in the City of Duarte by naming a Post Office after him.

But in 2003, Sergeant Atanacio Haro-Marín, from the City of Baldwin Park, from my district from California also died in Iraq. He came under heavy enemy fire. This young man was born in Zacatecas, Mexico and moved to Los Angeles at 2 years of age. He'll be remembered as a proud and courageous soldier who was living out a long held dream of serving in the U.S. military and will be honored by having a Post Office named after him in the City of Baldwin Park.

The sacrifices that my constituents made inspired me to pursue legislation to help other legal permanent residents who risk their lives every day and die

protecting our country's liberties and values, achieve the dream of becoming a citizen.

And in 2003, I introduced the Naturalization and Family Protection for Military Members Act. The bill, which was included in the Department of Defense Authorization Conference Report, was signed into law, and recognizes the enormous contributions of immigrants in the military by providing them with easier access to naturalization and immediate family immigration protections for those killed in action.

It is a tribute to them and their families and all veterans for the enormous sacrifices they've made so we and others around the world can live in freedom.

I'm proud today to tell you that I support our military men and women, and especially those that continue to serve us that are legal permanent residents. We need to see an immigration reform program come forward that is comprehensive, and salute soldiers such as this who have given their ultimate sacrifice for our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening, as I do most Tuesday evenings, on behalf of the 43-member strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. Some people may say, what's the Blue Dog Coalition and what's it all about?

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that are trying to restore fiscal discipline and common sense to our Nation's government. We're a group of conservative Democrats that were founded back in 1994 after the Republicans took control of the Congress. And at the time, it was a group that felt like they were being choked blue by the extremes of both parties. And today, we believe that we are in the middle, which is where we believe the majority of the people in America are.

We talk a lot about fiscal discipline. We talk a lot about accountability, because it is important, Mr. Speaker, that this Congress and this administration is responsible and accountable for how your tax money is being spent.

As you walk the halls of Congress, it is not difficult to know when you're walking by the office of a fellow Blue Dog Member, a fellow fiscally conservative, common-sense Democrat, because you will see this poster that says